



Aging Committee, March 8, 2022

Testimony of Regina Stankaitis, AARP Connecticut Volunteer, in SUPPORT of:
H.B. No. 5314, *An Act Deterring Fraud and Abuse Perpetuated Against Senior Citizens and*
H.B. No. 266, *An Act Concerning A Registry of Persons Convicted Of Financial Crimes Against Elderly Persons*

Good afternoon, Senator Miller, Representative Garibay, Ranking Members, and Members of the Aging Committee:

My name is Regina Stankaitis. I am a senior. I am disabled. I am a veteran. I am a victim.

Victim is a word I would never have used to describe myself.

I am educated and hold several degrees. I had a career as a business professional and am a veteran. I thought this would never happen to me but it did.

I trusted the home healthcare agency.
I trusted the caregiver.
I trusted the system.
I was wrong and blind in trusting any of them.

After my knee surgery, I suffered post operative delirium and was a high risk for falling and therefore needed a caregiver at home.

The caregiving vendor claimed that she does background checks and trains their caregivers. The caregiving vendor sent me a known felon who had recent multiple arrests.

I was robbed, my identity was stolen, my checks were forged, she rented an apartment, and used my Social Security number to open accounts and bought furniture and other items.

I was violated. I was exploited. I was the victim.....

My problems and frustrations were only starting. I was frustrated by the complicated system and lack of direction. You are mostly left alone to figure it out. I felt abandoned.

Nobody understands the trauma or impact of being a victim of senior exploitation. I spent weeks filing out government forms and working on my financial affairs. All my investments, pensions and 401Ks were in jeopardy of being stolen. I was traumatized and now suffer from PTSD. I am afraid of living alone in my house.

While there are laws in Connecticut that are meant to protect older adults from fraud and exploitation, we need to do more to ensure that these cases can be recognized, reported, investigated, and appropriately responded to.

That is why I support H.B. No. 5314, An Act Deterring Fraud and Abuse Perpetuated Against Senior Citizens.

I believe that our State government should fully support agencies responsible for investigating fraud, abuse and neglect and give them the capacity to respond in a timely manner. Information about suspected cases of fraud, abuse or neglect should be used in the State survey and certification process. Information about suspected cases should be reported to the appropriate State agency and acted upon to deter and prevent further fraud and abuse. I was not fortunate to have that happen in my case as it was not part of the certification process. Mandated reporters of elder abuse, neglect, exploitation and abandonment should know how to identify this mistreatment and understand how to respond appropriately.

I support H.B. No. 266, An Act Concerning A Registry of Persons Convicted Of Financial Crimes Against Elderly Persons. I believe policymakers should require a comprehensive national background check prior to employment for all LTSS workers. Individuals who have been convicted of burglary, larceny, sexual crimes, crimes involving financial exploitation or crimes involving abuse or neglect of vulnerable individuals should be prohibited from employment in all LTSS settings. In addition to these measures, creating a registry would help older adults by giving them access to information about individuals who may pose a risk to their well-being. A registry would allow older adults to check to see if someone has a history of committing financial crimes before they hire that person to provide assistance and let them into their home.

Unless you have experienced it, you don't know what it's like to be a victim and to be violated! There are many thousands of other seniors who are victims of elder abuse and exploitation. Maybe you know of someone or have a family member who has been exploited!

We need your help to protest them and show them the care and support they deserve.

I ask that you consider passing these bills for all of the Connecticut elderly who are abused and exploited!

Thank you!

Regina Stankaitis
AARP Connecticut Volunteer